

Amendments to the Claims

The following listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

Please amend claims 1 and 12 as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A pair of underpants comprising a front part, a back part, a crotch part and two leg holes delimited by the parts, a releasable connection having two parts that join in an overlapped region when in a closed condition to connect the crotch part to the front part and form an edge portion of each of the leg holes and that are separated from one another when in an open condition to allow an opening to be formed in the crotch area, said releasable connection extending from one leg hole to the other, and a flexible protection element fixed in place relative to the leg holes and configured to wrap around and- at least partly cover the edge portion of at least one of the leg holes formed by the releasable connection in the closed condition to thereby increase wearer comfort.
2. (Previously Presented) The pair of underpants according to claim 1, wherein the two leg holes are part of the opening formed in the crotch area in the open condition.
3. (Previously Presented) The pair of underpants according to claim 1, wherein the flexible protection element is attached to the outer overlapping part of the releasable connection and is adapted to fold around the edge portion of the at least one of the leg holes formed by the releasable connection when in the closed condition.
4. (Previously Presented) The pair of underpants according to claim 1, wherein the flexible protection element is made of a material selected from the group consisting of cotton, nylon or any other material suitable for making straps or tapes worn against the skin, being relatively unstretchable and having a soft feel.

5. (Previously Presented) The pair of underpants according to claim 1, wherein the flexible protection element is in the form of one or more ribbons that cover the overlapped region in the closed condition.

6. (Previously Presented) The pair of underpants according to claim 5 wherein the ribbons have a length of about 15 mm to about 120 mm.

7. (Previously Presented) The pair of underpants according to claim 1, wherein the flexible protection element is an elongated loop of material.

8. (Previously Presented) The pair of underpants according to claim 7 wherein the loop has a length of about 95 mm to about 160 mm enabling the loop to hold diameters from about 30 mm to about 50 mm.

9. (Previously Presented) The pair of underpants according to claim 1, wherein the flexible protection element includes two separate sections with a first section configured to wrap around the edge portion of a first of the two leg holes formed by the releasable connection in the closed condition and a second section configured to wrap around the edge portion of a second of the two leg holes formed by the releasable connection in the closed condition.

10. (Previously Presented) The pair of underpants according to claim 1, wherein the flexible protection element is attached to the inner overlapping part of the releasable connection and is adapted to fold around the edge portion of the at least one of the leg holes formed by the releasable connection when in the closed condition.

11. (Previously Presented) The pair of underpants according to claim 10, wherein a portion of the flexible protection element is secured to an outer side of said underpants by a fastening component when in the closed condition.

12. (Currently Amended) A pair of underpants comprising a front part, a back part, a crotch part and two leg holes delimited by the parts, a releasable connection having two parts that join when in a closed condition to connect the crotch part to the front part and form an edge portion of each of the leg holes and that are separated from one another when in an open condition to allow an opening to be formed in the crotch area, said releasable connection extending from one leg hole to the other, and a flexible protection element fixed in place relative to the leg holes and adapted to wrap around and- at least partly cover the edge portion of at least one of the leg holes ~~formed by the releasable connection in the closed condition to~~ thereby increase wearer comfort.

13. (Previously Presented) The pair of underpants according to claim 12, wherein the two leg holes are part of the opening formed in the crotch area in the open condition.

14. (Previously Presented) The pair of underpants according to claim 12, wherein said two parts overlap in said closed condition as an outer overlapping part and an inner overlapping part.

15. (Previously Presented) The pair of underpants according to claim 14, wherein the flexible protection element is attached to the outer overlapping part.

16. (Previously Presented) The pair of underpants according to claim 14, wherein the flexible protection element is attached to the inner overlapping part in the closed condition.

17. (Previously Presented) The pair of underpants according to claim 16, wherein a portion of the flexible protection element is secured to an outer side of said underpants by a fastening component when in the closed condition.

18. (Previously Presented) The pair of underpants according to claim 12, wherein the flexible protection element is made of a material selected from the group consisting of cotton, nylon or any other material having a soft feel suitable for wearing against the skin.

19. (Previously Presented) The pair of underpants according to any claim 12, wherein the flexible protection element is in the form of a narrow elongated strip of a soft material suitable for wearing against the skin.

20. (Previously Presented) The pair of underpants according to claim 12, wherein the flexible protection element includes two separate sections with a first section configured to wrap around the edge portion of a first of the two leg holes formed by the releasable connection in the closed condition and a second section configured to wrap around the edge portion of a second of the two leg holes formed by the releasable connection in the closed condition.